



## THE WEST CHISWICK & GUNNERSBURY SOCIETY

*[www.westchiswickgs.org.uk](http://www.westchiswickgs.org.uk)*

### Annual Report for 2021

#### 1. Meetings

Despite the difficulties presented by Covid and lockdowns in 2021 we were able to hold a virtual AGM in February and one public meeting in person in October. Management Committee meetings were held on Zoom in March and May and in person in July and October

#### 2. Activities of the Society

The Society is active in a number of spheres affecting the quality of life of Members including **planning** (building development and planning policy), and **environment** (streets, traffic and public transport) and **citizen engagement**. We respond to Council consultations or, alternatively, we initiate activities. We also regularly encourage our Members to get involved in these consultations.

The Society is an active participant in the Residents' Association Forum, alongside other residents' organisations, civic and amenity societies within the Borough many of which, like WCGS, are members of the informal grouping G15+. We work with fellow G15+ members on issues of mutual concern. We attend meetings of the Chiswick Area Forum and also participate in specific-issue groups such as the Gunnersbury Station Action Team (GSAT) and the Lionel Road Liaison Group (LRLG) concerning the Brentford Football Stadium. Most of these groups held virtual meetings during the year which we attended. We attended, and will continue to attend, quarterly meetings with Chiswick Business Park to discuss issues of concern to local residents such as potential noise following the Events Licence extension. We liaised with the Edmunds House Residents' Association in relation to the Business Park license extension.

Our Management Committee scrutinises the Council's list of new planning applications and its Pending Decision List week by week and takes action, submitting comments etc. on relevant items. We work with the Council's planning officers, other interested bodies, residents and amenity groups and, when possible, with the developers themselves. The Society is also represented at various meetings of the Hounslow Planning Committee, Inspector's Inquiries, etc. when matters affecting our Members' interests are being decided.

As well as watching out for residents' interests in these planning matters, the Society is also active in promoting the more positive aspects of life on our patch, such as a sense of place and history and in improving those amenities which make life here more enjoyable.

### **3. Planning Issues**

We keep an eye on relatively small developments such as house extensions including basements, shop fronts etc. and respond on those that would have a negative impact on our Conservation Areas or on residents' quality of life. In addition, there are always some very large developments that could have a profound impact on all our lives. Major planning issues of this type we have been addressing during the year are:

- **Chiswick Business Park (CBP): Brentford Stadium off site parking**

The Society responded to an application to provide 500 parking spaces for spectators attending matches at the newly opened Brentford Stadium. We raised issues about the impact on nearby residents and on public safety and comfort in relation to pedestrian and vehicle movement. The proximity of the CBP to Gunnersbury Station, which was expected to be heavily used by spectators, might lead to conflict and congestion. The application was approved with Conditions intended to mitigate the impact.

- **Gunnersbury Close, Oxford Court and Beaconsfield Close**

A 'Small Sites' plan has been adopted by the Council to develop Affordable housing on parking and garage sites on council-owned land. These three sites are in our area. We broadly agreed with the aims of the projects but we have some concerns about the way the plans will develop. There are issues with existing local residents being overshadowed, the potential loss of trees on the sites, the density and the quality of the architecture and the design. We submitted comments on applications for the first two sites and are awaiting an application for the third.

- **2 Larch Drive (the 4<sup>th</sup> Mile)**

The application for this major development on the current B & Q site on which the Society submitted extensive objections was presented to the Planning Committee in December with a recommendation for approval. The Society's Chairman spoke at the meeting requesting that the application be refused or deferred so that a well-informed decision could be made. She suggested that approval would mean permitting a major scheme dependent on a highly speculative Technical Showcase with 300 car-parking spaces. It would be allowing an unsustainable major development that would compromise the Council's ability to meet its Climate Action Plan. Several members of the Planning Committee expressed misgivings but the application was approved (subject to referral to the Mayor of London) by means of the Chairman's casting vote.

- **Holly House**

This is the latest application for a building on this site at Chiswick Roundabout following The Pinnacle, The Citadel, The Octopus and The Curve. The artist's impression of the proposed 24-storey block is elaborately festooned with greenery including trees although it remains to be seen if this is a realistic addition or just 'green-wash'. At the residents' meeting in October a number of concerns about this application were raised including the poor siting for a residential building between the A406 and the elevated section of the M4, the density of the housing,

the cumulative strain on local infrastructure (transport, schools, amenities especially water, doctors etc.) and the height of the building on the edge of low-rise residential Conservation Areas The Chairman would be submitting the Society's comments and encouraged members to submit their own.

- **Gunnersbury Park**

An application for a large Secret Cinema event in the Park was made and then later withdrawn. Following the destruction by fire of the Park café, an application for a new café was submitted that we supported and that was later approved. It is expected to re-open sometime in 2022. The Park was awarded Gold in the London in Bloom competition and a Green Flag.

- **Conservation Area applications**

A number of applications were made for changes to properties in the Conservation Areas in our area. Some of these included radical changes to the footprint or façade of the property and we are keen to make sure that the character of the area is not damaged by inappropriate changes to local properties. Changes to traditional shop fronts in the Gunnersbury Parade are a particular concern, especially when they are made without seeking planning permission. Where relevant, we request the Council to take enforcement action but this can be difficult to achieve. We were pleased to see that the second proposal to build on garden land in Thorney Hedge Road had been refused. We object in principle to the use of back gardens for residential development, especially in areas such as ours with a deficit in public open space

- **American University**

In June we were approached by the American University in Richmond for our views concerning a potential move to a building in the Chiswick Business Park. We met representatives of the University in an online meeting and later submitted comments in support of their planning application for change of use from office to teaching space. The application has been approved and the University will open its Chiswick Business Park campus later in 2022. We look forward to engaging with staff and students.

#### **4. Planning: Policy**

- **Local Plan Review: Great West Corridor (GWC)**

The Examination in Public of the two Local Plan Reviews started on 9<sup>th</sup> November. The Chairman participated in several of the Hearing sessions focussing on issues related to the Great West Corridor including transport infrastructure. She raised the serious access and capacity issues at Gunnersbury Station.

She also participated in the sessions dealing with the Council's proposed declassification of significant areas of Green Belt in the West of Borough to permit development including logistics for Heathrow Airport. The Society is participating in this part of the Enquiry because the protection of London's Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land is a matter of principle and of fundamental importance not only for the entire Borough of Hounslow but also for London as a whole. We are pleased to be working with CPRE and several other organisations to challenge the Council's proposals.

There will be further Hearings and consultations in 2022 before adoption of the Reviews can take place.

## **5. Licensing**

- **Chiswick Business Park: Entertainment and Alcohol Licence**

An application was made to vary the existing licence. This included significantly increasing the capacity and the entertainment activities and prolonging the event licensing hours and the outdoor music times. We responded to concern from residents in the surrounding streets about the potential increase in noise and litter and other impacts of large crowds at Business Park events. The Society requested modifications and some amendments were made. The Chairman attended the on-line hearing that took place at the end of June. The Licensing Panel approved the application but a Condition was added that representatives of the business park would meet with local residents every quarter to discuss events and concerns. The Society has since been represented at two such meetings.

## **6. Street Environment**

- **Green Up Gunnersbury Campaign**

Members joined other local residents in a spring litter pick along the High Road and Gunnersbury Avenue. Lots of rubbish bags were filled and the participants treated to cake afterwards to reward their efforts. The Society's Meanwhile Garden on the High Road and other plantings are still thriving and have been watered by local residents. The Chairman continued her membership of the Hounslow Community Reference Group concerned with the greening of the borough.

## **7. Social Activities**

No social activities, including celebrating the Society's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, could be arranged this year. We will resume as soon as we are able to.

## **8. Society Officers and Management Committee**

The Honorary Officers elected at the Annual General Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020 were:

Chairman	Marie Rabouhans	(Silver Crescent)
Vice Chairman	Adam O'Neill	(Cambridge Road North)
Treasurer	Charlotte Aldridge	(Thorney Hedge Road)
Secretary	Kate Vicic	(Grosvenor Road)

The following Members were elected or re-elected to the Management Committee:

Robert Hare	(Grosvenor Road)
Terry Thorn	(Thorney Hedge Road)
Don Osborne	(Arlington Gardens)

In October Paul Hayler was co-opted onto the Committee. His nomination will be put forward at the AGM. All of the Honorary Officers and Management Committee members will offer themselves for re-election at the AGM on February 21<sup>st</sup> 2022.

**Any Member who would like more information about serving on the committee should approach the Secretary. We are especially eager to bring younger people onto the Committee.**

## **9. Membership**

Membership currently stands at 65 paid-up Members.

## **10. Treasurer's report**

The Society continues to be solvent. Subscription income was once again lower than the 2020 level due to a) some reduction in membership and b) the fact that more members are now paying the unwaged rate. There were no members' donations this year, due to the absence of public meetings.

The Society successfully completed its Safeguard review in 2021, and continues to have HSBC as their bankers. However, monthly bank charges have now been introduced, which will incur additional costs of £60.00 p.a. on each account.

### **Treasurer's Annual Statement for 2021 As at 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021**

#### **DAY-TO-DAY ACCOUNT**

**Opening balance (brought forward from 2020):** **£1406.41**

#### **INCOME**

Membership subscriptions 540.00

Donations from members 00.00

**Total Income** **540.00**

#### **EXPENDITURE**

Venue Hire (2 committees +Public meeting) 108.00

Refreshments 00.00

Website 230.00

Postage/Stationery 37.18

Subscriptions (HACAN, London Forum) 63.00

Bank charges (Dec) 5.00

**Total Expenditure** **443.18**

**Closing Balance (carried forward to 2022):** **£1503.23**

#### **CAMPAIGNS AND CONSERVATION ACCOUNT**

**Opening balance (brought forward from 2020):** **£293.75**

#### **Less:**

Bank charges (Dec 2021) 5.00

**Closing balance (carried forward to 2022)** **£288.75**

#### **NOTE ON AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS**

The accounts kept by the Treasurer are reconciled against monthly statements issued by the Society's banker, HSBC, together with other relevant records. The Society's constitution requires that the financial records and the Treasurer's Annual Statement be examined by 2 Members of the Society who shall provide signed statements that they are satisfied as to their accuracy. We are grateful to WCGS members Richard Vinter and Chris Jenks for carrying out this duty.

Charlotte Aldridge, Honorary Treasurer

January 2022

## **Subscriptions**

Subscriptions for 2022 are due by the AGM on **February 21st 2022**. Members will recall that a rise in fees was agreed at the AGM for introduction for 2021 membership (see Minute 6 of 2020 AGM). The subscription fee for this year will therefore be set at £10 per annum for all members.

Cheques should be made out to West Chiswick & Gunnersbury Society (or WCGS) and sent (or delivered) **with a completed membership form** to:  
WCGS Secretary,  
Flat 3, Kenilworth House,  
9A Grosvenor Road, London W4 4EJ

Subs can also be paid by Standing Order:

Our bank is HSBC  
Sort Code: 40-02-13  
Account No.: 51399306  
Name: The West Chiswick & Gunnersbury Society  
Please give your name as the Reference.

However you decide to pay, please fill in and return the Membership Application Form. This helps us keep track of Members' contact details.

The Secretary WCGS  
Flat 3, Kenilworth House  
9a Grosvenor Road  
London W4 4EJ